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ADF Consecration Of A New Grove

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This article is an outgrowth of what I've seen in the Grove I've been working with. The major ritual writers in the Grove insist on using Guardians of the Quarters and casting a circle. From conversations with Himself, this is not unusual. It is hard to break people of old habits.

One of the major differences between Wicca and ADF is the use of circles. Wicca uses a closed circle with Guardians to both keep energy in and nasty things out. ADF is open, both psychiclly and physically. This is possible because demons or other nasties wouldn't interfere with a sacred space.

Wicca uses the circle casting and invocations of the Quarters to establish sacred space and to orient the participents to the four directions. This creates a sort of containment vessel,like for a nuclear reactor. You can build up lots of power before triggering it. Also, if you screw up, the damage is limited to the circle. The casting of a circle is is apparently an outgrowth of the Goetic (Mideval Christianity) magical system. In Goetic practice, the circle is a fortress. From within the fortress, you would summon a creature to appear in another warded area near you. The concept of the four elements plus spirit were created by Greek philsophers. This school of thinking is called Milesian. They taught that all substance is made up of one of the four elements. Various teachers thought different elements were the true one. The origin of the Wiccan elements is therefore origanally alchemical. By mixing the four elements, you could create any substance, including the 'philosphers stone'. The four Quarters are mapped to the elements (earth - north, fire - south, water - west, and air - east; often with a fifth added, spirit at the center). In a Wiccan circle the energy flow is circular, except for specific occasions, you don't go widdershins.

ADF uses a 3+1+1 system. It consists of the Three Worlds (Land, Sea and Sky), Fire and an Underworld. This is based upon the patterns that are found in Indo-European social and mythological systems. This pattern is farmers and other producers (Land), priests/brahmens (Sky), warriors (Sea), a Ruler (Fire) (the symbolism of Leader = fire might come from same idea or description as the Gods being 'bright') and the outcasts (Underworld). The Three Worlds are organic, in that real living creatures can be found there. The mapping of the elements to a directions is a major difference from ADF. "In Druidism, the World of the Waters is not in the west, it is everywhere." D.L. Bonewits. Instead of being 'between the worlds', an ADF Grove is at the center of all the worlds.

The ancients did pay attention to the four directions when laying out there sacred sites and temples. They oriented them along the cardinal points. This occurs in many traditions. As an example, Freemasonry uses the four directions in laying out the Lodges. The four directions are mentioned when opening the Lodge, but only in reference to where people sit. There is no evidence either way that the ancient Druids used Guardians of the Wiccan variety.

ADF ceremonies are open to any people who won't disrupt the ritual. Sacred space is open for entry and egress at all times. We are an inclusive, not an exclusive organization. Part of ADF's using open rituals is based upon having sacred space. That is what this ritual is meant to create. To use physical world security analogies, a circle is a fence. A Wiccan circle is the equivelent of a eight foot barbed wire fence with four security guards. At each ritual meeting, the fence is erected, guards posted and the ritual done. At the end, the whole thing is torn down and put away. An ADF ritual doesn't want such an exclusionary barrior. An ADF Grove would instead have the equivelent of a permanent two foot picket fence around it. You can't enter the area without noticing it, but it doesn't keep you out by itself. Any nasty things would know not to trespass. This ritual is designed to create such a permanent fence, without draining the person(s) doing the casting.

Site location:

There are two factors in choosing a site for a Grove. The first is psychic. The second is physical. The area chosen needs to have the right vibes. It must be friendly and receptive to becoming a permanent Grove. (See Larry Cornet's article in DP 2 or the 1st anthology).

The physical layout:

My personal preference is to work in a circlular shape for Pagan rituals. It is preferable to choose a site on property you own, so that you can change it as you want it. Try to make sure it will remain dry all year long, and if you want privacy, that you'll have it, especially during the winter. Next, mark the perimeter with some sort of permanent, visible sign. A good example would be fieldstones, bricks or cinderblocks. You'll probably want a firepit of some sort. It would probably be a good idea to check with the local fire department about the town ordinences affecting such things. Lay down some sort of base in the circle that will be usable year round. These preparations should be done before the ceremony. Some, like laying in a gravel drainage system, will take money (a dirty word) and hard labor. You might also want to build some sort of seating, be it only planks atop cinderblocks. There should also be some sort of safe path laid out to the Grove that is free of roots and potholes. Provide some means of light for after dark workings. Also plan for some sort of handicap access.

There are some special considerations for this ritual. First, you'll need three good sized containers, one each for water, earth/clay/or similar, and an insence burner or smudge. The earth or similar should be in a slurry, that is liquid enough to spread, sort of like pancake batter. Second, some sort of permanent marker for each of the four directions. This could be a stone marker, wood carving or similar. This will stay outside for a long time, hopefully decades at least. Preferably it should be visible so people can orient themselves; or, for areas with inconsiderate Fundies, buried. For this ritual use more whiskey or hard alcohol for the final consecration than usual.

Shadowpath Grove came up with the idea of having three Gates along the path to the Grove, one for each of the Worlds plus a firekeeper. As you pass thru each of the Gates, you ask the keeper for something or answer a question. You are then marked by the Gatekeeper with smoke (Sky), water (Sea) or mud (Land). If ADF decides to map each World to a I-E social caste, it might be nice to have the question or request match the Gate that way. That is instead of asking the Gate of Sky for something cereberal (Wiccan air = thought), ask something relating to the priestly or braman sphere of influence or something doing with say air travel.

The Ritual

People pass through gates to Grove. Once in the Grove, they could start a chant or stand quietly. I recommend that when people pass into the Grove, that they alternate going left and right around the circle from the entrance. Once all are there, do a settling song:

Tree Meditation:

Specifacation of ritual:

> D1 or D2:Today we are here to establish an ADF Grove. May it grow, and in growing provide a center for us to work within. May we nurture it, as it will nuture us and our descendents. We ask Manannon, the Keeper of the Keys, Bridget, the Matron of Bards, the spirits of the old times and of this place, people of the old times, and the Gods of the old times, to hallow this Grove. May they watch over it, and keep it from harm. May they keep it sacred.

Invocation of Manannon the Gate Keeper in English (D2) and Irish (D1), and chant. Invoke Matron of Bards (Bridget). Triad invocations and consecrating of the waters. Nature, Ancestors and the Gods as a whole, being the order.

Praise offerings:

Starting with D2, offerings are made to the Gods of the occassion. This is the primary energy building. For this occassion, I've choosen Manannon as he is the Keeper of the Keys, and Bridget who is the Matron of Bards and the Hearth Goddess.

The sacrifice:

> D2: Our praise goes up with thee on the wings of eagles; our voices are carried up to thee on the shoulders of the winds. Hear now, O Manannon, O Bridget, we pray thee, as we offer up this sacrifice of life. Accept it we pray thee, and cleanse our hearts, giving to us of your peace and life.
>
> D1: Teann ar moladh suas chugat ar sciathain iolar; beitear ar nglortha suas chugat ar ghuailne na gaoithe. Eistigi anois, a Mhanannon, an Bhrid, mas e bhur dtoil e, agus sinn ag ofrail na h-iobairte seo ar son na beatha. Glacaigi lei, mas e bhur dtoil e, agus glanaigi ar gcroithe, ag roinnt arainn do chuid siochana is do bheatha.

The Omen:

Possible repetition of Praise offerings and Omen seeking, if needed.

> D1: Rejoice! Manannon and Bridget have accepted our sacrifices!

Meditation on personal needs:

Repetition on group needs:

> D1 or D2: Today we are here to establish an ADF Grove. May it grow, and in growing provide a center for us to work within. May we nurture it, as it will nuture us and our descendents. We ask Manannon, the Keeper of the Keys, Bridget, the Matron of Bards, the spirits of the old times and of this place, people of the old times, and the Gods of the old times, to hallow this Grove. May they watch over it, and keep it from harm. May they keep it sacred.

Induction of Receptivity (The Catechism of the Waters):

Final consecration and sharing with passing song/chant:

Meditation on reception of blessings and reinforcement of group bonds:

Consecration of boundry:

> D1: Today we mark the planting of a new Grove. Groves are at the Center of all the Worlds, and have as their edges, the Three Worlds. We mix the Waters of Life with the World of the Land! (pour some of waters into the bucket of dirt or clay slurry and mix)
>
> D2: Today we mark the planting of a new Grove. Groves are at the Center of all the Worlds, and have as their edges, the Three Worlds. We mix the Waters of Life with the World of the Sky! (pour some of waters onto the censor of incense, this is when the Waters of Life must be whiskey or similar hard liquer)
>
> D1: Today we mark the planting of a new Grove. Groves are at the Center of all the Worlds, and have as their edges, the Three Worlds. We mix the Waters of Life with the World of the Sea! (pour some of waters into cauldron of water and mix)

With the mixing of the Waters with the materials of the Three Worlds, D1 and D2 motion three people forward. The three Gate Keepers would be good ones for this. These three people each take one container and walk around the perimeter painting the edges as marked earlier by construction. Hopefully everyone will now see a faint circle of energy around the Grove. If the path to the Grove is easily defined, you might want to paint it also. While the boundry is being defined do a chant:

"We All Come From the Goddess"

We all come from the Goddess
And to Her we have returned;
As our Ancestors
Worshipped Her air, land, and sea.

D2: As Groves are at the Center of all the Worlds, so are they also on the Earth. Being on the Earth, they have orientation. Thus we mark the directions. North! South! East! and West! (after saying each direction, pour some of the Waters of Life upon the markers)

D1: By marking the directions we know where our Center is in this World. This Grove becomes a crossroads. From such a crossroads, we can go anywhere. By knowing the directions may we also safely return to this place.

D2 motions forward four people to move the directional markers from the center to their permanent locations. Try and avoid having the three Gate Keepers and the Fire Warden doing this. Another possibility is to have all of the members of the Grove lend a hand moving and setting up the markers. This is especially good if the markers are large and/or heavy. If setting the markers will take more than a minute or so, do a chant to keep people focused.

After the markers are set:

D1: To the creatures of the Three Worlds, Land, Sea and Sky; and to the four directions, North, South, East and West; I do declare this space to be sacred! Let none tresspass upon it with evil intent. May it grow, and in growing provide a center for us to work within. May we nurture it, as it will nuture us and our descendents. We ask Manannon, the Keeper of the Keys, Bridget, the Matron of Bards, the spirits of the old times and of this place, people of the old times, and the Gods of the old times, to hallow this Grove. May they watch over it, and keep it from harm. May they keep it sacred. Biodh se'!

All: Biodh se'!

Affirmation of success:

Thanking of the Entities involved. Closing of the Gates. Reversing the Tree meditation. Libation to the Earth. Final Benediction.

Recessional song/chant: Walk with Wisdom

Walk with wisdom
from this hallowed place.
Walk not in sorrow,
our roots shall ere embrace.
May Strength be your brother,
and Honor be your friend.
and Luck be your lover until we meet again.

End notes: Some of you might want to add a few lines about consecrating the hearth or firepit. Obviously, the chants I've selected are suggestions, as are the actual words. It is the intent of the words that is important.

References:
Druids Progress #2 & 4
"World Civilizations", Burns & Ralph, 5th edition, vol. 1, pages 193+

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